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Reply dated 26 April 2005
Responsive to Office Action mailed 26 January 2005

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace the previous set of claims with the following complete set of claims.

1. (Currently Amended) An external change aid comprising a changing mat having a planar side having areas comprising engaging means ~~engageable with an absorbent article adapted to be worn externally on a lower torso of a wearer~~ and areas not comprising such engaging means, ~~whereby~~ said engaging means assists being adapted to engage with and hold portions of an absorbent article adapted to be worn externally on a lower torso of a wearer and having fastening means, the engaging means being adapted to engage with and hold the portions of the absorbent article while the fastening means is used to fasten the absorbent article in place for wearing or while the fastening means is unfastened for removal of the absorbent article and thereby assist in the respective application or removal of said absorbent article when so engaged.
2. (Original) The external change aid as in Claim 1, wherein the engaging means comprises one or more engaging members in the form of stripes, rectangles, dots, circles or triangles.
3. (Original) The external change aid as in Claim 2, wherein the engaging members comprise engaging elements selected from interlockable elements, hooks, loops, adhesives, cohesives, or combinations thereof.
4. (Original) The external change aid as in Claim 3, wherein the engaging means is adapted to releasably engage the absorbent article by an application of pressure on said engaging means.
5. (Original) The external change aid as in Claim 2 wherein one or more of said engaging members has the form of a stripe having a width of between 0.5 cm and 5 cm.
6. (Original) The external change aid as in Claim 1, wherein the planar side has a top portion and a bottom portion and only the bottom portion comprises said engaging means.
7. (Original) The external change aid as in Claim 1 wherein the changing mat is foldable.

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8. (Original) The external change aid of Claim 7 wherein the foldable changing mat is stiffened by being unfolded for use.
9. (Original) The external change aid as in Claim 1 having restraining means disposed on an opposing planar side and adapted to fasten the external change aid to an external object.
10. (Original) The external change aid as in Claim 9 comprising at least two parts connectable by said restraining means.
11. (Original) The external change aid of Claim 1 wherein the engaging means is adapted to engage with a landing member on the absorbent article.
12. (Original) The external change aid of Claim 11 wherein the landing member comprises loops and the engaging means comprises hooks adapted to engage with the loops of the landing member.
13. (Original) An article of commerce comprising a package containing an external change aid comprising a changing mat having a planar side having areas comprising engaging means and areas not comprising such engaging means, wherein the planar side has a top portion and a bottom portion and only the bottom portion comprises said engaging means, said engaging means comprising one or more engaging members in the form of stripes, rectangles, dots, circles or triangles, said engaging members comprising engaging elements selected from interlockable members, hooks, loops, adhesives or cohesives, and also containing an absorbent article adapted to be worn externally on a lower torso of a wearer, wherein said engaging means is adapted to engage with said absorbent article and thereby assist in the application or removal of said absorbent article when so engaged.
14. (Currently Amended) The article of commerce of Claim 13, wherein the external change aid is engaged pre-engaged with the absorbent article.

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15. (Original) The article of commerce of Claim 14, wherein the package contains additional absorbent articles not engaged with the external change aid.
16. (Original) The article of commerce of Claim 13, wherein the engaging elements comprise hook fasteners and the absorbent article comprises a landing member comprising loops adapted to engage with the hook fasteners.
17. (Original) The article of commerce of Claim 13, wherein the absorbent article is a diaper having an elastic topsheet.
18. (Original) The article of commerce of Claim 13 wherein the absorbent article comprises a landing member disposed on a back exterior surface of the absorbent article and adapted to engage with the external change aid.
19. (Original) A method comprising the steps of:
 - a) providing an absorbent article adapted to be worn about a lower torso of a wearer;
 - b) providing an external change aid comprising a changing mat having a planar side having areas comprising engaging means adapted to engage with said absorbent article and thereby assist in the application or removal of said absorbent article when so engaged;
 - c) engaging the external change aid with the absorbent article;
 - d) placing the engaged absorbent article and external change aid in close proximity to the wearer's lower torso;
 - e) fastening the absorbent article around or to the wearer's lower torso;
 - f) disengaging the absorbent article from the external change aid.
20. (Original) The method of Claim 19 further comprising the step of restraining the external change aid to restrict the movement of the external change aid in relation to an external object by fastening the external change aid to said external object prior to engaging the external change aid with the absorbent article.